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ABSTRACT

Transfer procedures in the case of students transferring from junior colleges to upper level institutions (institutions offering only upper level and graduate work) should be as flexible as possible. Four major points should be followed closely in developing transfer policies: (1) Upper level institutions should develop programs that cater to the needs and interests of junior college graduates. (2) Upper level institutions should accept without question all graduates of junior colleges who have earned the Associate of Arts or the Associate of Science Degree. (3) Upper level institutions should set up guidelines for the general curriculum junior college students should take, but they must not quibble about specific courses. (4) Upper level institutions should give credit and accept students on the basis of life experience as well as on formal credits earned. (HS)

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CURRICULUM AND CREDIT TRANSFER PROBLEMS IN THE UPPER LEVEL INSTITUTIONS

I would contend that while there are curriculum and transfer problems, in many cases these problems are not as serious as many educators believe. It is like having a mosquito buzzing about. First, we try to keep the mosquito from biting us by mosquito nets and sprays. However, once it has bitten us we try not to scratch the bite, for we know this only makes it worse. This analogy is apropos to our topic today. We should try to alleviate as many of the transfer problems before they occur. If a problem does develop, we should try to keep it in the proper perspective with the over-all educational goals of the student. Too many times our egos become involved and we become somewhat inflexible in our thinking. It can be said we do not want to lose face among our sister institutions, for we have a high academic standard which must be maintained even at the expense of the student. This is especially true when dealing with our "junior" colleges. Now, what can we do to keep this "mosquito" from biting? Let me suggest just a few:

1. The philosophy of an upper division school plays an important role. For most students, upper division institutions should be a capstone in their educational process. Credit should readily be accepted from the junior colleges. The upper level institutions should be primarily liberal arts and graduate level schools serving students transferring from a dozen or so junior colleges. Careful thought should be given to those programs that depend heavily on lower division courses that are highly specialized and technical in nature. An example of this would be engineering programs or certain foreign languages. Strength should be in the social sciences, psychology, business and education.

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2. The upper level institution should accept graduates from the junior colleges that have earned the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. There should be no quibbling about whether this course or that course counted. Let us assume that the junior college has done its job well in educating the student. Four year colleges rarely dispute credits earned by a student from an accredited high school when he comes as a freshman. They generally specify that the student has 3 to 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, etc. Never that he must have had English Literature from 1600 to 1900.

3. Consideration must be given by the upper level colleges to students transferring credit from junior and/or senior colleges. Ordinarily, we would expect 90 quarter hours or 60 semester hours at the freshman-sophomore level. Again, schools must not get tied down to accrediting individual courses. The student should have had a series of general education courses among the 90 hours. Suggested are 30 to 45 hours directed in the areas of the sciences, social science, English and the humanities. The colleges must not say he has to have 3 quarter hours of Music or Math 104. To illustrate this ridiculous situation, in our State of Illinois, a few years ago, a junior college was sending their graduates primarily to two State Universities. One of the universities required students to have a course in world geography while the other one required a course in economic geography. The courses were not interchangeable in the thinking of the two universities. Consequently, the student needed to know during his freshman year the senior university he planned on attending, or face the risk of taking the wrong geography course for that particular school. This seems very far fetched to us, but not to the two senior universities.

4. Upper level schools must reconsider the premise that a student must have

90 quarter hours for admission regardless of his previous educational, social or work background. Tests are now on the market which can help us in deciding whether a person has the educational prerequisites to do senior college work. If he can do senior college work, why penalize him by requiring two years at the freshman-sophomore level and then more years at the junior-senior level. In this regard, I would suggest that a test such as a "College Level Examination Program" commonly known as "CLEP" be considered. If a person can do the equivalent or better of a student at the end of his sophomore year, why not admit him to our senior institution? This type of admission would be especially beneficial to the older person out of school for a number of years, but by various learning experiences has gained knowledge independent of formal education. Also, the CLEP program can be helpful to the student who has gone through a junior college or another learning institution in a technical program and then decides to change or modify his life goals, but finds it difficult to rationalize why he should once again go back through the junior college to pick up the necessary transfer courses for entrance to the senior college. A classic example of this is our Registered Nurses educated in hospitals.

Otherwise, let's have transfer procedures as flexible as possible. Don't demand particular transfer courses a student must have for admission.

One of the biggest challenges, it seems to me, is not the transfer problem from the junior college to the senior college or from the freshman-sophomore level to the junior-senior level, but transfer between schools at the upper division level. It is ironic that a student can move from one high school to another without penalities, but, for some reason at the collegiate level, this is not possible.

We now have a number of people in our society with credits the equivalent to two degrees. However, they cannot meet the residency requirements since many universities require the equivalent of a year of credits earned at their institution. These persons are never in one location long enough to meet residency due to various reasons; spouses are transferred or new jobs arise in other cities. The residency policy is justified by some on the basis that universities are unique and different and that students must serve an "apprenticeship". But, I really doubt that schools are that much unique and different, especially the state universities at the junior-senior college level. One university (not in Illinois) claims that their educational philosophy will not permit short apprenticeships. However, their policy does allow students to take junior-senior level work during summer school. Also, the school employs a number of visiting professors. So, it is quite possible, in this particular institution, for a student to get his Bachelor's degree during the summer months and never have a resident professor.

Therefore, I would suggest a "University Common Market" be created, in which credits are transferable between schools. As a beginning, I would propose inter-transferability of credit between state universities of the same governing system, eventually expanding this to other schools by agreement. A student could then take all or part of his work at one, two or three institutions and graduate with either a common degree issued by all the schools or a degree from the school where the majority of his credits were earned. He still must meet the unique graduation requirements of that school in regard to major or minor fields of study.

In summation, I am not so concerned about the previous background of a student, for we know our student bodies come from a varied background. If at all possible, let's admit them and let them prove their worth with us. If they do well, as I believe many of them will, we may have produced another Enstein or

a John Dewey or just another good solid college graduate. The proof of our educational system is what we produce - not what we admit.

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